

MARRIAGE AND SEX RELATIONS

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on to the doors of your house. Your wife will then love you again and will come back to you.

Often but little notice is taken of these affairs. Occasionally an injured husband will claim from his wife's lover a string of ceremonial currency or a pig, or he may take the opportunity to divorce his wife, but usually only if he wishes to do so on other grounds. More often nothing is done about it, unless the woman becomes pregnant.

There are a number of plants (see pp. 134-8) believed to possess contraceptive properties, which are generally known and widely used by the women in their intrigues. Whatever the reason, it is certain that these affairs are followed by pregnancy less often than might be expected. When conception does occur, the matter begins to be taken seriously. Sometimes the woman will pretend that the child is her husband's, and this will be tacitly accepted, even though other people besides the couple and the woman's husband know it to be false. This I have on hearsay evidence only. In other cases—this also I have only through informants, but from more than one, and these reasonably reliable—attempts are made to produce an abortion in order to avoid discovery. One account given to me runs as follows: 'If a woman has been with her lover in the bush and finds she is pregnant, she says to him: "My blood is not flowing, I think I am going to have a child, I have had no flow for one moon." They are ashamed, and talk about it for a long time. Then the man gets the leaves of the *karēb* plant (a tough creeper, of the *Rutaceae* order, whose stems are used for making string), and chews them with lime, and rubs the mixture on the women's abdomen. She swallows some of it, and it causes the flow to begin again. Then the man says to all the people who laughed at the woman because they thought she was pregnant: "Look, she is menstruating, she is not pregnant". It may be that the massaging of the abdomen is sufficiently violent to produce the desired effect, without presupposing any actual result of chewing the *karēb* leaves. They say that a woman will never bring about an abortion in the case of a child by her own husband, however many she may have. But they do it for the children of their lovers, because if a woman has a child by a man other than her husband she is ashamed. Cases have occurred in the past of women pregnant by their lovers committing suicide by jumping from the top of a tree.

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837 The more usual procedure, nowadays, however, is that the
 586 husband divorces the woman, who then marries her lover. Several
 848 such cases were personally known to me. The following is typical:
 [855] Tahol was married to Tsigot, a man much older than herself, and
 while he was absent from the village Wasē became her lover. She
 became pregnant; her husband was very angry when he discovered
 it, but did not divorce her. The child died. Tsigot went to Rabaul
 to work as an indentured labourer, Wasē and Tahol became lovers
 again and had another child. This time Tsigot divorced Tahol,
 and Wasē married her as his third wife. As far as I can judge they
 are living very happily together. His first wife has died, and his
 second is still an immature child, though she lives in his hut. He
 [855] seems to be really fond of Tahol, and both adore the baby, now
 nearly two years old, who gets even more petting than Melanesian
 children usually do.

837 No stigma of any sort attaches to the child of such a union,
 848 whether the parents marry or not, and none to the woman if her
 lover marries her. In most of the instances that came under my
 observation, marriage had taken place after the woman's divorce.
 These marriages seem to be among the happiest that I met with,
 which is, perhaps, only to be expected, since they are almost the
 only ones in this society which can fairly be said to be the result of
 individual preference on both sides. But many, perhaps the
 majority, of the clandestine affairs are not taken seriously by either
 partner, and are clearly entered into for no other reason than the
 gratification of physical desire. The word used for them, *riuk*, is
 [195] translatable as 'play'; it is the same word as is used for the play of
 a child. and was also applied to the antics of my kitten.

WOMEN'S PART IN INTRIGUES

837 Mrs. Hadden, who was one of the first white people to live in
 this part of the country, and who has always been interested in the
 natives, told me she was certain that the woman was, more often
 than not, the more active, if not the instigating partner in love
 affairs. A similar view was expressed, quite independently, by one
 of the priests, who had worked in the district for many years.
 Direct evidence is difficult to obtain, but there is reason to think
 837 that this is true. It is strongly suggested in the folk-tales, which
 538 do, I am sure, reflect actual conditions. There is, for example,
 a frequently recurring incident of a woman who pretended to be

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PREGNANCY AND CHILD-BIRTH

KNOWLEDGE OF PATERNITY

842 IT will be evident from what has been said in the preceding chapter concerning the attitude of these natives to extra-marital intercourse when it results in pregnancy, that they are aware of the connexion between copulation and conception. They say, of the man, *wataputs bai'i*, which may be translated 'he makes the child come up', *wataputs* being also used in the sense of 'to go and fetch', and *taputs* without the causative prefix *wa-* meaning 'to come at a person's call'. Of the woman, it is said *mon to giug non*, 'the woman is pregnant'. The same terms are applied to animals. There is abundant evidence of their knowledge in their conversations and in their tales. One of these, for example, deals with a woman whose husband was impotent. She begs him to let her go, so that she can marry a man by whom she can have a child. He refuses, and she takes a lover in the bush, by whom she becomes pregnant. Her husband says: 'Who has made you pregnant? I know the child is not mine, because I cannot have coitus with you.' When the child is born the husband kills it, and the woman divorces him and marries her lover.

842 Their knowledge, however, does not seem to go beyond the necessity for copulation. The child is thought to be formed out of the woman's blood. This idea may possibly have been suggested by the cessation of the menses during pregnancy since this causal relationship is recognized by them. On the part of the man, penetration is thought to be the essential factor. The seminal fluid is looked upon as water, and there is complete ignorance as to the function of the testicles. Village gossip has it that there was a man—now dead—in a neighbouring village whose penis was destroyed by a sore. He made an artificial one of wood, by means of which he copulated with his wife, who produced offspring. The name of one of his sons still living was adduced as proof of the truth of the story, the obvious explanation apparently not being applied to this case. There are other indications of the

846. The reason given for this practice was that as the father had 'made the child come up', he was responsible, as well as the mother, for its well-being during birth and for the first few days of its life, and that these precautions were taken to ensure this. The death of a two-days'-old child at Kurtatchi was attributed by all to the fact that the father, a young man of 'advanced' views, had refused to keep the couvade rules. The custom is a clear acknowledgement of responsibility for the child on the part of the father. There is no couvade for a child born as the result of extra-marital intercourse.

TREATMENT OF NEW-BORN CHILD

844 824 The umbilical cord (*busō*) is never severed until the afterbirth has been expelled. If the expulsion of the afterbirth is delayed over-long, the root of the plant *pupuna* is brought, and chewed with the betel-mixture, the resulting mass is spat out and rubbed on to the big toe of one of the assistant women. She then pushes with her toe on the abdomen of the parturient, at the level of her umbilicus. They say this loosens the placenta and causes it to be expelled.

844 [732] The child is left lying, still attached to the placenta, on the piece of fibre on to which it was expelled, until it shows signs of life. All the women look on anxiously, but no one touches it as long as it remains motionless. It seems probable that this custom may sometimes lead to the death of a child who might have been saved had prompt measures been taken. As soon as the slightest movement is perceived the cord is cut. The mother herself, if she is able, is considered the proper person to do this. It should be measured to the child's knee, and cut at that level; they say that if it is cut closer to the child's body the umbilicus will swell up and be painful, and will afterwards project. (Very many children show signs of umbilical hernia.) The cut end is not treated in any way. It is left attached to the child until it drops off naturally. In some cases which came under my observation, this seemed to occur much sooner than would be expected, for instance on the second day after birth. It is preserved in the lime-pot which contains the mother's supply of powdered lime for chewing with areca-nut. There it will remain till the child is grown up, unless the child dies, when it will be taken out and buried in the house. It is usually allowed to remain in the lime-pot, covered by the powder, indefinitely, unless some one finds it by accident, and asks: 'Aren't you going to throw away